



## Vol. 2 Issue 12

Inside This Issue

**December 2006**

*Universally Accessible  
Shelters*

*911 Needs Alert*

*Glastonbury Is  
Storm Ready*

### WHAT'S NEW:

**December is Universal  
Human Rights Month**

### UPCOMING TRAINING and EXERCISES

**Dec 4 & 5 - ICS200 evening  
classes—Plainville**

**Dec 4-13—Crime Prev. &  
Counter-Terrorism, POSTC**

**Dec 12-15—WMD Incidents,  
train the trainer, New Haven**

**Dec 18-20—ICS-300—CCSU**

## Commissioner Notes

By James M. Thomas

It seems that the month of December has arrived so quickly. Fortunately we were able to get through the hurricane season without a major impact this past year. We are now getting ready for the winter storms that will soon be upon us.

With the cold weather the possibility of snow storms, ice storms, and the loss of power increases significantly. So also does the possibility that the Local Chief Elected Officials (CEO'S) working with the Local Emergency Management Directors (LEMD'S) and other public safety professionals may have to open the public shelters in their respective communities.

DEMHS has been in communication with all of the Chief Elected Officials (CEO'S) and the Local Emergency Management Directors (LEMD'S) and have been urging them to make sure that the local shelters are compliant with the American Disability Act (ADA) and capable of handling all of the citizens of their community. Today more than ever, everyone wants to be sure that society and particularly government, is sensitive to the needs of everyone in our communities, young and old and especially being aware of the need for wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, and service animals.

This issue we focus on the need to be aware of the necessity for universally accessible shelters, as well as registering with the E-911 system if someone does have certain medical conditions or disabilities that first responders should be aware of when responding to your home.

We believe that working together we can and will make sure that all of our citizens are protected and that we will have the shelters ready to accept all that either need or want to come to them. Enjoy the holidays!!

Happy Holidays!!  
**Happy Holidays!!**

## Universally Accessible Shelters

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina and other recent natural disasters, emergency management officials and advocates for seniors and people with disabilities have been paying increasing attention to inclusive disaster planning. All aspects of emergency preparedness are being re-examined: public communications and notification systems, responder training, personal preparedness guidelines, evacuation planning, short-term sheltering strategies (including shelter-in-place supports), long term housing and support needs, and coordination with health care and human services providers.

Because Connecticut is periodically hit with major hurricanes, blizzards, ice storms and other weather emergencies, one of our first priorities has been ensuring that locally designated emergency shelters are accessible and able to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities and senior citizens. This summer a group of disaster management professionals, state agency representatives and advocates began meeting to discuss these issues and to recommend improvements. Following the group's recommendations, the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPA) have recently launched a joint initiative to assist municipalities in locating and developing "universally accessible shelters". These are defined as congregate public shelters which are planned, equipped and operated to meet the sheltering needs of a wide variety of community members, including most people with disabilities and older adults.

The need to develop universally accessible shelters is largely driven by changing demographic realities. As Americans live longer and health care and personal support technology advances, a growing number of older adults and younger people with different types of disabilities are living independently in our communities. Further, in many communities, increasing numbers of people who are dependent on medical technology and frequent attention from skilled health care providers are living in their own homes. In developing emergency preparedness plans, local emergency management directors, town managers, and chief elected officials must consider the identities and needs of these growing segments of the population.

Most older adults and people with disabilities who are likely to seek public shelter during an emergency will require little more than physical and/or communications accessibility, coupled with reasonably flexible operating policies that reflect awareness of their needs. A smaller number may require assistance or care from others in order to perform routine activities of daily living, such as dressing, eating, getting in and out of bed, or using the bathroom. Some of these people will likely arrive at a shelter with their own assistive devices (e.g., wheelchairs, scooters, walkers) or with other supports such as a service animal, neighbors, family members, friends, peer supporters or personal care assistants who will help them.

Continued on page 3

Given physical accessibility, sufficient space and flexible operating policies, people with these types of needs should be able to shelter successfully with their neighbors in a reasonably well equipped public shelter. However, others with similar needs may not be able to arrange to bring their own supplies or personal assistance networks with them. While even a “universally accessible” community shelter may not be able to meet the needs of all such individuals, anticipating their needs and engaging in thoughtful planning will assure that, to the maximum extent possible, people are not needlessly separated from their neighbors or family members, and that their health and safety is protected.

It is important to note that even a universally accessible shelter is not intended to meet the needs of absolutely everyone. More specific sheltering plans still need to be made for people who: 1) have very serious health-related conditions; 2) depend on complex medical technology; 3) require frequent monitoring and attention from skilled health care professionals; or 4) require care and support from others but cannot count on their own support network being available in an emergency. In fact, individual emergency plans anticipating a variety of scenarios - not just evacuation and congregate shelter - should be made for every community member living in these circumstances. It is expected, however, that local shelters that follow the principles of universal accessibility will be able to serve many people who would previously have been re-directed to more remote special needs shelters, thereby minimizing disruptions in peoples’ lives and reducing the number of individuals for whom specialized supports and transportation must be provided.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of this universal approach is an increased likelihood that people most in need of public shelter in an emergency will actually seek it in a timely way. Various studies of recent disaster experience in different parts of the country suggest that uncertainty about accessibility and accommodations in evacuation and shelter facilities leave many seniors and people with disabilities reluctant to comply with evacuation warnings and orders. So do worries about being separated from personal support networks (e.g. family members, friends and other helpers). And, for some, the prospect of entering a “special needs” environment evokes images of institutionalization, raising anxieties about losing independence - perhaps even permanently losing a cherished independent living situation. While other factors, such as language barriers and economic status clearly impact public responses to emergency warnings and instructions, it is clear that perceptions and concerns about the location, capabilities and administrative practices associated with emergency shelters also heavily influence people’s behavior. Ensuring that community shelters are, and are understood to be accessible, equipped and reasonably administered will likely help in this regard.

A document from the U.S. Department of Justice entitled *An ADA Guide for Local Governments: Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities*, which is available on the web at:

<http://www.ada.gov/emergencyprepguide.htm>

Continued on page 4

It addresses issues that effect persons with disabilities that you must consider as you reassess your shelter capability at the local/community level including:

- Notification;
- Evacuation;
- Emergency Transportation;
- Sheltering;
- Access to medications, refrigeration, and back-up power;
- Access to mobility devices or service animals while in transit or during stays in shelters;
- Access to information.

The ADA Guide is preliminary guidance. As stated above, a number of government and advocacy groups are working together to develop a draft guidance to share with local officials and emergency management directors. In addition, DEMHS will be printing a document entitled *"A Guide for Including People With Disabilities In Disaster Preparedness Planning"* which was developed by the Connecticut Developmental Disabilities Network. The guide is primarily intended for those involved in preparedness planning at the municipal and regional levels. It also contains information that is useful to persons with disabilities and their families. The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Social Services, UCONN, DEMHS and DPH are working to develop training and technical assistance initiatives to assist with:



- Encouraging persons with disabilities and elders to develop personal preparedness plans and to anticipate needs for sheltering in place
- Educating the elderly and persons with disabilities about shelter options in their communities
- Educating first responders and shelter managers on how to evacuate persons with disabilities and the elderly



Other partners in this initiative include the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR). DMR recently published excerpts from "Connecticut's Guide to Emergency Preparedness" along with additional information specific to DMR-operated and private residential and day program settings in its Direct to Families publication, which is mailed to 15,000 consumers and their families. In addition, DMHAS/DCF Behavioral Health Response Teams are prepared to assist persons with disabilities and the elderly who are sheltered in response to a disaster or catastrophic event.



## DEMHS HIRES NEW DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Retired Branford Deputy Fire Chief William J. Hackett has been promoted to the position of Director of Emergency Management at the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS). Hackett brings over twenty eight years' experience as a first responder to his new position and will be responsible for the administration of the State's Emergency Operations Center, the five DEMHS regional offices and personnel deployed throughout the state and will manage all-hazards preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation functions during significant incidents at the state level, coordinating with emergency managers from Connecticut's 169 towns and cities and two tribal nations.



Hackett, 49, began his public service career in 1978 as a telecommunicator at CMED, New Haven, and was appointed as that organization's first Chief Telecommunicator in 1983. He was appointed to the Branford Fire Department in 1984 as a Firefighter/EMT, and served as Training Officer, Deputy Fire Marshal, and Deputy Chief of Operations, before retiring in 2001. After his retirement, Hackett entered the private sector as the Environmental Health and Safety Manager for the CuraGen Corporation in New Haven and was the Manager of Statewide Communications for American Medical Response of Connecticut. He continues to hold state certifications as an Emergency Medical Technician, Public Safety Telecommunicator, and Fire Marshal.

Hackett is being promoted from his position as an Emergency Preparedness Program Specialist with the Strategic Planning and Grants Unit at DEMHS. Representing Connecticut, he has served as a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) 2006 federal grant peer reviewer in Washington, DC, is a member of the DHS National Target Capabilities List Phase II committee for Life Safety and Mitigation and is a program reviewer for the DHS Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Hackett is currently the co-chairman of the Public Safety State Interoperability Communications Executive Committee and is certified as a State Coordinating Officer, by the Emergency Management Institute and FEMA, to direct state and federal activities during a Presidential Disaster Declaration with the Federal Coordinating Officer assigned by the President of the United States.

Hackett lives in Branford with his wife Julie and their two children, Lauren and Ryan.

## How to Alert 9-1-1 to Your Special Needs

You should complete this form if you want your police department, fire department, ambulance, or other emergency response agencies to know about medical conditions or disabilities when you call 9-1-1 in an emergency.

When you call 9-1-1 from a wireline phone, Connecticut's 9-1-1 emergency telephone service displays your name, address, and telephone number at your local 9-1-1 answering point. (A wireline phone is a phone that has a wire from a telephone pole to your home.) Filling out this form will alert the 9-1-1 operator that you or someone else living in your household has a medical condition or disability. This information helps the 9-1-1 operator to provide appropriate emergency help.

If you want the 9-1-1 operator and emergency response staff, (that is the police department, fire department, or emergency medical staff) to know that you or someone else living in your household has a medical condition or disability, fill out this form. This information will be displayed at the 9-1-1 answering point only when you call 9-1-1.

This service is not available for cell or internet phones.

The information that you provide will be put into the 9-1-1 system and will stay there until you request that it be changed or removed or your account is closed. It is your responsibility to notify SBC when there is a change in the condition described on this form. When there is a change, please submit an updated form.

When filling out this form, be sure to:

1. Provide your name, address, and telephone number.
2. Check the box or boxes which apply.
3. Sign and date the form.

Mail this form to SBC at this address:

SBC  
Enhanced 9-1-1 DMS Group  
310 Orange St., 2nd Floor  
New Haven, CT 06510  
(Rev. 6/2005)

Form can be found on Page 6

## How to Alert 9-1-1 to Your Special Needs

Telephone Number (include area code) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_

Check all the boxes that apply.

- ☐ **B Blind** – Someone at this location is blind or visually impaired.
- ☐ **COG Cognitive Impairment** – Someone at this location has a cognitive impairment.
- ☐ **H/D Hard of Hearing / Deaf** – Someone at this location is hard of hearing or deaf.
- ☐ **LSS Life Support System** - Someone residing at this location is physically linked to equipment required to sustain his or her life.
- ☐ **MI Mobility Impaired** - Someone residing at this location is bedridden, uses a wheelchair, or has a mobility impairment.
- ☐ **PI Psychiatric Impairment** – Someone at this location has a psychiatric impairment.
- ☐ **SI Speech Impairment** – Someone at this location has a speech impairment.
- ☐ **TDD Telecommunications Device for the Deaf** – Someone at this location may be using a TDD/TTY.
- ☐ Please **remove** any existing indicators presently being displayed.
- ☐ Please **change** existing indicators to the ones above.

By completing this form, I understand that I am responsible to notify SBC of any changes with regard to the above information. I further agree that I will indemnify, defend, and hold harmless SBC, the State of Connecticut, the Public Safety Answering Point, and my municipality from and against any and all claims, suits, and proceedings resulting from or arising out of the provision of this information.

I understand that this information will remain as part of my 9-1-1 record until such time as I notify SBC to either change or delete it.

X  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Upcoming Training & Exercise

Dec 3	ICS-200 - Tolland
Dec 4	ICS-200—Tolland
Dec 4	IS700—Avon
Dec 4 & 5	ICS-200 Evening Classes—Plainville
Dec 4-13	Crime Prevention & Counter-Terrorism (8 days) - POSTC
Dec 12-15	WMD Incidents, Train-the-Trainer - New Haven
Dec 13	Anti-Terrorism Training (formerly SLATT) — POSTC
Dec 18-20	ICS-300—CCSU

For training and exercise questions please contact Bob Christ at 860-706-5519, Bob Scata at 860-706-5518, or Sharon Mazzochi at 860-706-5517.

Training is critical for first responders and is readily available through the State Fire Academy, Regional Fire Schools, and the Police Officers Training Academy. First responders include Police, Fire, Public Works, and 911 dispatchers to name but a few.

All of the following organizations have the ability to deliver **NIMS training** to your police officers, firefighters, public works employees, 911 dispatchers, health workers, education staff and emergency management personnel. Training can be delivered weekdays, weekends or evenings to meet your needs. The NIMS program can be delivered in four, eight or twelve hour modules depending on the duties assigned to personnel.

You should also know that these programs are available on line at FEMA's web site:  
[http://www.fema.gov/tab\\_education.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/tab_education.shtm)

### Training Facility Contact Information:

Police Officers Training Council	203-238-6505
Connecticut Fire Academy	860-627-6363
Eastern CT Fireman's Training School	860-487-1105
New Haven Regional Fire Academy	203-946-6215
Wolcott Fire School	203-879-1559
Hartford County Fire School	860-828-3242
Burrville Fire Training School	860-482-7496
Valley Fire Training School	203-736-6222
Middlesex County Fire School	860-663-1308
Fairfield Fireman's Training School	203-254-4709
Stamford Regional Training Fire School	203-977-4673

All State Agencies should contact the Training Unit at DEMHS.



**Excerpt from Citizen Corps Monthly Newsletter:  
Newsletter story for National Citizen Corps Publication**

The first Connecticut Annual Citizen Corps Council Conference was held Monday, October 30, 2006 at the Mohegan Sun Conference Center, Uncasville, CT. The theme of the conference was "How to Cost Effectively Use and Expand Your Emergency Management Resources."

Elizabeth DiGregoiro, the Acting Director, Office of Community Preparedness, Preparedness Directorate, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security was the key note speaker. Over 160 people attended that included the Connecticut State Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner as well as municipal emergency managers, local police officers, local fire fighters, elected officials, and local volunteers. The Honorable Richard Blumenthal, the Attorney General for the State of Connecticut also spoke to the attendees and provide great insight into training and liability related issues. The conference was well received and informative to all *and a decision to make this an annual event was approved.*

Elizabeth DiGregoiro, the Acting Director, Office of Community Preparedness, Preparedness Directorate, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security key note speaker at Connecticut Citizen Corps Conference, held at Mohegan Sun Conference Center, in Uncasville Connecticut, October 30, 2006.



## Town Notes: Glastonbury—Letter from NWS

The town of Glastonbury has been recognized as a *StormReady* community...the second such community in Connecticut and tenth in all of New England. This designation indicates that Glastonbury has done everything possible to improve emergency responder and citizen preparedness in the event of a natural disaster.

*StormReady* is a National Weather Service program that addresses the need for a higher level of community awareness in order to minimize the loss of life and property from extreme weather. *StormReady* encourages communities to take a new, proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations and public awareness. While no town can ever be 'Storm-Proof,' *StormReady* arms communities with improved communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property - before and during an event. After the application process, the *StormReady* Advisory Board, consisting of the NWS and other state and federal officials, recommends recognition. A *StormReady* recognition is good for three (3) years, after which the town must apply for renewal.

In order to become *StormReady*, Glastonbury met or exceeded established criteria in six (6) areas: 1) Communications, 2) NWS Information Reception, 3) Weather & Water Monitoring Systems, 4) Local Warning Dissemination, including NOAA Weather Radios in local city or government-owned buildings with public access, 5) Community Preparedness - Safety/Spotter Talks and public education via media, and 6) Administrative Tools/Record Keeping.

More specifically...based on a population of 33,000, Glastonbury needed 4 ways to receive warnings. They surpassed this with (1) NOAA Weather Radio receivers at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the 24-hour Warning Point, the Town Manager's Office, the School Superintendent's office, and the Bus Yard; (2) the COLLECT system from the State Police at the Warning Point; (3) a private weather service display which also gives warnings; (4) amateur radio; (5) access to EAS alerts via local TV at the Warning Point and EOC; and (6) WeatherBug, which chirps at you when a warning is issued. They needed 3 ways to monitor hydrometeorological conditions. Again, they surpassed this. Radar is monitored several ways, including NWS website and a private meteorological weather display; a rain gauge, thermometer, and anemometer at the EOC; weather equipment at the Buttonball Elementary School, which is part of the WeatherBug network; and stakes on the Connecticut River to monitor the river level at Point Road.

Glastonbury has one of the best, if not *the* best communications ability that NWS has seen. Their emergency management van is equipped with 800 MHz radios, intercity radios, a hotline to dispatch points in Hartford County, to name a few. They have their own local 10 watt AM radio station (broadcasting @ 1570 on the AM dial), which is linked to NOAA Weather Radio alerting...and can be powered up to 30 watts in an emergency. All emergency services personnel (EM, EMS, Fire) carry pagers with alert and voice capability...a total of 172 pagers! The Town of Glastonbury has its own redundant transmitters for this pager system. When severe weather is approaching, Parks and Recreation proactively notifies the two main pools and the lifeguarded Eastbury Pond, so that people can get out of the water. There are outdoor Whalen sirens located at each of the 4 fire houses...and the capability exists to activate these sirens from either the Police Dispatch Center (Warning Point), Fire Headquarters, or the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)...and there can even be voice-over on them. Glastonbury's Channel 13 local Cable TV station provides many weather safety public service announcements and there can be manual override capability in the case of an extreme emergency.

Con't on page 10

The citizens of Glastonbury can rest assured that there is excellent communication amongst all emergency officials, town government, the school department, etc. The scope of their operation, though, is not just during the active weather. Throughout the year, they participate in public safety events, such as a booth at Applefest...or talks to Boy Scouts and Senior Citizens. Internally, they conduct drills and training of emergency personnel. Once again, congratulations on a job extremely well done!

Sincerely,  
Glenn Field  
Warning Coordination Meteorologist  
National Weather Service - Taunton, MA

